pennsylvania musician

magazine

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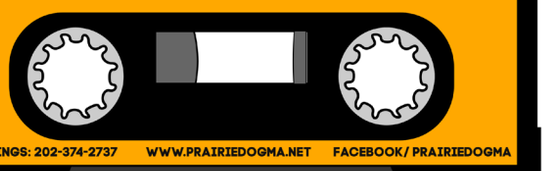

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Rachel Rocks.....Out & About

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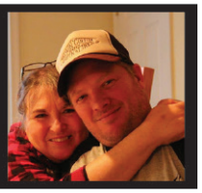
Editor Ramblings By Josh Noll



Happy New Year!! Welcome to 2022! Far out another year dealing with covid times has left us all a little cranky. Good news is that we all have learned to deal with it and have continued on with day to day life. As bands and venues either push ahead or fold by the wayside, it leaves us with a lot of uncertainty. What will 2022 bring? Only one way to find out, just plug ahead and keep on keeping on. The only thing we can do is to keep supporting the local venues that have been keeping music alive.

There are still a bunch around and even some new ones getting started. The Scottish Rite is back at it with a bunch of shows coming up this year. Starting out January with Best Of The Eagles on the 15th, Destination Motown on the 16th, followed by The Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Experience featuring Shawn Klush and Cody Ray Slaughter on January 30th. Check out the ad on the back cover for ticket info and more details and upcoming shows.

Reverb has Dark Tranquility on the 29th with Cannibal Corpse coming in to play on February 21st. Check out the ad on page 2 and plan accordingly.

The Racehorse is having an original music night on the 7th featuring Light the Lamp, Black Wax, Number of the Sun and Words for Hands. Later in the month on the 15th it’s the 22nd annual Y2K New Years Party with Silver Mountain and Stricken. This is always a huge party with all the bells and whistles of a New Years party just after the fact.

Defiant will be hitting the XL Live stage on February 5th with Eternal Frequency, Lyndhurst and Dinosaurs in Paris.

Bob Randall has formed a new band, Heartbreak Highway. A Lancaster based 6 piece Southern Rock/outlaw country band featuring popular covers and some of Bob’s original music. They have been hard at it and are ready to start scheduling shows for fairs, festivals, concerts and anywhere else that enjoys some good ole outlaw country. You can reach them by emailing:band.heartbreak.highway@gmail.com or call Bob at 570-428-2101.

Another new band to the paper is Nail Bite. These young rockers have been making a name for themselves and recently have been crowned Castle Blakk Radio “Band of The Year”. They have been cranking out new music all year and playing some pretty big shows in the process. If you haven’t checked them out scope out the ad in this issue to see where they are playing next. I think Central PA and beyond will be hearing a lot from Nail Bite in 2022.

So there it is a start to the New Year and another year of PA Musician Magazine. We would like to thank all our advertisers, fans, and supporters of our paper. We are still a grassroots business so please don’t be afraid to contact us about how we can help you promote your band or venue in 2022. Its a new year and strange times but we can help take the guess work out of advertising! Its as easy as a phone call or email and we can get started today. email joshnoll@pamusician.net or call/text 717-636-4203

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OUT 'N' ABOUT

By Rachel Rocks

Happy New Year!! I can't believe it's finally January and 2022 is here. It's amazing how a new year brings so much hope to a better life. The chance to restart on anything in your life that needs restarted! I would once again like to hope that live music gets back to normal. We are really struggling as a music community. Some places are back and packed, and some places are closing or struggling to survive. I'm not sure what the magic answer is for the bands and the venues, but hopefully things balance themselves out soon.

This month was, as normal, a very busy one. It all started a long time ago with Ed Varner at PJ Whelihan's on Union Deposit Road. I love going there for their wings and fried pickles, and now I'm very excited they are also doing live music! Ed couldn't believe they made him wear shoes, but alas, he was still able to rock out and have a good time. Ed does a fantastic job interacting with the crowd. It was cool to see him connecting with tables of teenagers, and everyone was having a blast, even the parents. Ed is able to take requests and play just about anything. He had the restaurant dancing and singing along and a fun time was had by all!

Ed Varner

The night was still young, so next I headed to the Winner's Circle for the DMC Band. Every now and then when requested DMC Duo (Darrell and Marisa) pull together some extra musicians, and play as a full band, this night it was Kyle Schoenly on guitar, Wade Corbin on drums, and new to their show was Jared Adam on bass. It's always fun seeing them as a full band and seeing how much more versatile they can be. They had the dance floor hopping! I love watching people line dance. I wish I was coordinated enough to figure it out. It always amazes me how easy it looks, when I know it's nearly impossible.

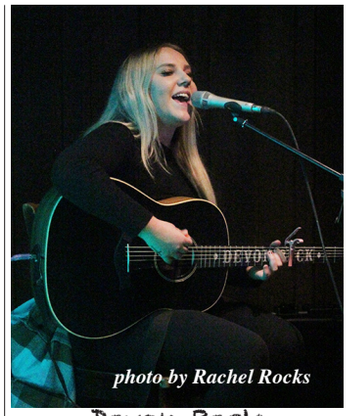
Next up I finally got to see Buckskin Whiskey at Johnny Joe's. These guys have been working hard writing and recording new music. I've been able to listen to their music online, but it was awesome to finally get the chance to see them live. They've been touring around throughout PA and beyond promoting their EP "Roll On" and they are now recording their first full length album at Rock Mill. Josh has a great voice for their growly southern rock songs, and the band really does a great job backing him up. They really got the party started at Johnny Joe's.

Buckskin Whiskey

The next day I had the privilege to "judge" (more like give constructive criticism) to the Central PA Music Hall of Fame Youth Music Showcase. It was an awesome afternoon at the Englewood getting the opportunity to see 10 youth artists/bands perform. Chris James and Phil Freeman were my fellow judges and all of us were blown away by the talent of every performance. If an artist was just a solo artist they were also backed up by the "house band" which consisted of Logan Bedard on drums, James Klippel on keys, Rod Goelz on guitar, and Liam Galiano on bass. It was an awesome opportunity to give these young artists a chance to play with a full band and a very talented one too!

The first artist was 18yo Gillian Smith, a country/pop artist from Mechanicsburg who played "The Champion" by Carrie Underwood. Gillian has been performing all over the place, even down in Nashville, I've seen her usually accompanied by the amazing Sarah Sheriff on guitar. Gillian kicked off the show, because later that day she was headed to Rams Head Live to open for Chris Lane!

Next up was Alex Warner (13) and Najeeb Moore, Jr. "Junior" (14). These guys were an instrumental/blues/rock band from York. Their song was "Voodoo Child (Sight Return" by Stevie Ray Vaughan, obviously originally by Jimi Hendrix! Yeah.. 13 and playing Hendrix!! And I later found out that it was the first time he was playing with a wireless guitar, so he actually walked off stage in front of the crowd all while wailing away on his guitar! These boys had all 3 of us judges, plus many others sitting there with our jaws dropped! Keep your eye out for these 2! What a combo!



Devon Beck

Next, we had Nail Bite, this was a full heavy metal band from Lancaster. They played "The Devil in I" by Slipknot! These artists were not messing around! All of their song choices were just shocking. Then when you see a young lady take the mic as the lead singer we were all like WHAT?!? But wowzers! What a performance! Even Phil told her that she was doing it right with her growling and her overall vocal performance. That was one heck of a compliment, and very well deserved. I of course loved that all of them were headbanging and had one heck of a stage performance! Chris Rider Photography got some amazing shots of the entire day. They just released a full length album, "Lost Travelers" and they have quite a few shows already lined up for 2022. They were the winners of an ad in the PA Musician Magazine, so check out their ad, and get them booked at your venue, go support them at a show or at least check out their music online.

Another full band, Before the End, a teen rock band from York, played the song "Come Together" by The Beatles, and they again killed it! Out of 5 members in the band, 4 of them were singers and they had amazing harmonies. Not only did they have an amazing performance, but they also had super cool graphics, their own merch stand set up, and they even mentioned their name and website from the stage! They checked all of my boxes for an organized band, and they are all under 18!

Heather Woleslagle (18), a performer from Mechanicsburg, played "Your Cheatin Heart" by LeAnn Rimes. She definitely has that country twang and did an amazing job at connecting with the audience. She is already a vocal student of Phil's and he was very proud to see her do such an amazing job for a live performance.

Carsyn Kinneman (17) an alternative rock/punk artist from Camp Hill did the song "Blister in the Sun" by Violent Femmes. At just 17 she's already been performing all over central PA, every opportunity she gets. She had the punk rock look down to a T, including stickers on her guitar! She had a very unique voice. She's currently working on her first EP, which will hopefully be released soon.

Emily's Toybox

Faith Noel (16) a singer/songwriter from Gettysburg performed the song "Born This Way/Stupid Love (mashup)"

continued on next pg...

photo by Rachel Rocks

Light Up the Moon

by Lady Gaga. She started playing the keys, but then broke away and really started belting out the song and connected with the audience. She's already released an original song called "Believe" and she also knows how to play the ukulele, mandolin, and guitar!

Christian Yeager (18) is a country singer from Mechanicsburg, performed "Walking in Memphis" by Marc Cohn. He even bought some blue suede shoes to wear for the special occasion. He nailed the performance! Christian was recently on our Cover so I was able to learn a lot about him. He released his first single in May called "Born for a Friday Night" that is currently charting on MusicRow Magazine's Top 80 Country Breakout Chart. It's been getting lots of airplay on country music stations throughout PA and beyond! Congrats Christian!!

Addi Grace (12) is a performer from Palmyra. Even though she is the youngest in the competition, she broke out with "Ain't No Rest For the Wicked" by Cage the Elephant and she nailed it! Just days before the competition she was tempted to change songs because it is definitely not an easy song to sing, but she conquered it! Addi was the CPMA Winner in 2020 for the Best Youth Artist. She is so humble, but she is very talented and definitely an artist to watch!

Last but not least, was Emme Ryan (18) an Americana Singer/Songwriter from Shillington, performing the song "The Story" by Brandi Carlisle. It was awesome to see these young kids choosing and playing such old school songs. Emme released her debut EP "Roots" back in July of 2021. All day I was abso-

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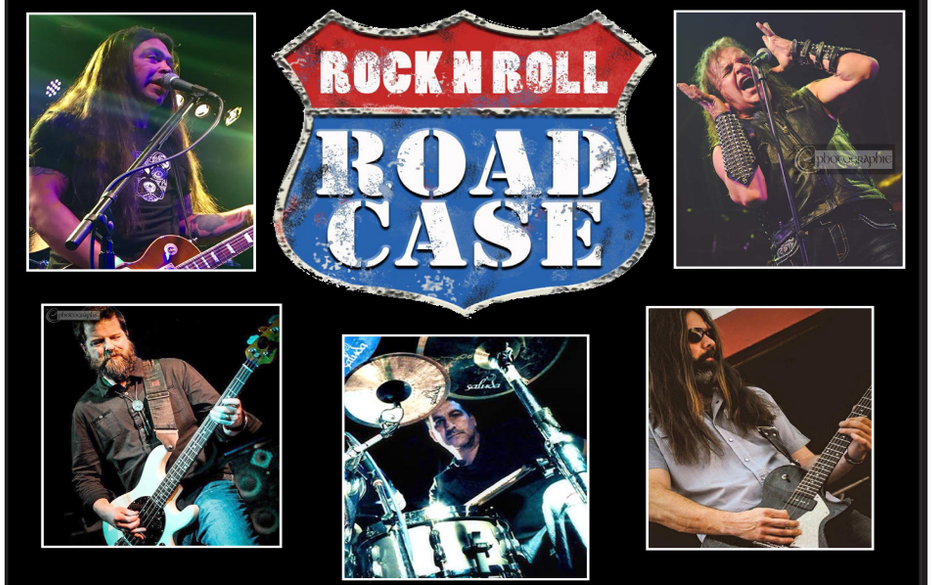
Vertigo Vulture



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lutely blown away by all of the talent!

The best part of the showcase was that there were no winners or losers, at the end of the day all of the artists were awarded with amazing opportunities or items from Central PA Businesses, everything from free recording, merch, advertisements, etc.. Brandon took the time to interview each performer and see what benefited them the most and hooked them all up with these amazing prizes.

The 3rd Annual Central PA Music Awards will be held at the Hershey Theatre on Thursday, March 24th. The tickets go on sale on January 7th. This is an amazing event every year and something you don't want to miss! The nominees will also be announced on January 3rd, so keep your eyes and ears out so you can vote for your favorite artist, business, etc, to be this year's winner!

My next night out was one we were looking forward to for months, The Glorious Sons at XL Live, presented by Harrisburg University. I first heard The Glorious Sons at XL two years ago, and I was so excited when I saw they were coming back! Based out of Canada these guys were on lockdown for a while, but they are finally back out on the road touring.

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It was awesome to get a bunch of friends together for a great night of music. Just rocking out and having a fantastic time! Brother Elsey opened up for the Glorious Sons and I quickly was addicted to their music too. With Harrisburg University and XL Live, they are both bringing in amazing shows to our area. If you've never heard of a band that you see on their schedules, do yourself a favor and Google them, because chances are it is a band you won't want to miss! All of their artists are top notch! As a little disclaimer, it is true that some artists are requiring Vaccinations, or proof of a negative test to attend their shows. Please remember this has nothing to do with the venues decision no matter where you are seeing a show, it is completely up to the musicians. It's all a little crazy, but if it makes the musicians feel a little safer, then so be it.. but please don't take it out on the venues.

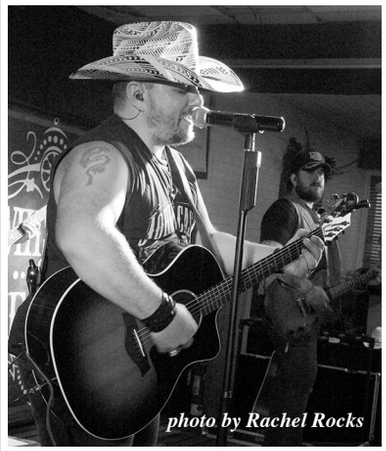
The next night I zoomed down to the Racehorse Tavern for Emily's Toybox. It turns out Emily's Toybox was actually paid to be there for a birthday party. His wife surprised him by bringing his favorite band to the Racehorse. It was awesome of them to still have the venue opened to the public because the public definitely showed up for this show! The Racehorse was packed and there were plenty of shenanigans happening! The venue was standing room only, but that's ok because most of us were up dancing anyway! It was awesome to hear them playing in a venue that doesn't make them sensor their show. Yes, Mike sometimes does get a tad bit harsh, but of course you can't help but laugh after the shock"er" wears off.

The following night started out early with a road trip to Shippensburg to see Derek Henry at Maxie's Brew House. Derek was totally shocked when Matt and I walked in. I love surprising people! We might have a little too much fun harassing Derek on stage, but he's able to roll with it, and make it a super fun night! Derek has a lot going on in January and February with not only his acoustic shows, but also Observe the 93rd. Make sure and like and follow his Derek Henry Acoustic page for all of his shows and details and come out and party with us. Derek is also nice and lets Matt play during his break, and I even broke out the ukulele for a song. Matt has an amazing and unique voice and I can't wait til he is out there playing a full show and letting Derek play during his breaks! Ha!

After Derek we zoomed to Johnny Joe's. We unfortunately missed the openers The Cretins, a Ramones Tribute Band, but I heard they put on a great show. We did get there in time to hear Spinebelt. Another band I've heard of for years, but finally got the chance to see. Butch Boyer again killed it on lead vocals and the whole band kicked A**! Definitely another band to keep on my radar, and hopefully our paths will cross again soon. The main reason for our trip there was to see the Suicide Puppets, who also happen to be on our cover this month. It's been a while since I got to see a full show, and we had a blast head banging the night away! Everyone was unmasked for the show except Donnie. It is crazy seeing the guys without their makeup, but if you want to find out why, check out their cover story in this issue. The Suicide Puppets had a super busy 2021, and already a lot of amazing opportunities on the horizon in 2022.

The next night out was another long one. My day started very early from a birthday sleepover with Mason and then with a trip up to Mom's to make Christmas cookies and celebrate her birthday! But on my drive home I couldn't resist, there were too many cool things happening in one area, so I drove past my exit and headed out to Snitz Creek for Devon Beck. Devon has been having a blast living in Nashville and having lots of amazing learning opportunities playing in Writer's Rounds and doing other shows, but she still loves her trips up North to play for her family and friends. When I got there I also saw Addi Grace and her parents, it was nice bumping into them too. They get Addi out everywhere they can to be exposed to as many musicians as possible. It's awesome to see musicians supporting other musicians.

After a set with Devon I ran down the road to the Winner's Circle for Whiskey on the Rocks who were playing as part of a benefit for the PA Wounded Warriors. The Winner's Circle was packed with people. It was awesome to see such an amazing turn out for the event. The dance floor was packed with so many line dancers, I really don't know how they manage to not fall on top of each other! I haven't heard Whiskey on the Rocks for a few years, but every time I do hear them I'm impressed! They played their new original "Captain America" that will officially be released on February 7th. It is a great song and one you definitely want to check out!



Whiskey On the Rocks

After a set from Whiskey on the Rocks, I finished the night down the street at Hollywood Casino with Light Up the Moon. With three lead singers in their band there is never a dull moment! Every song is a surprise with such a vast expanse over the past 3 decades, you never know what they will play next. Rob even switched rolls with Joe and came out from behind the kit to take over the stage. They definitely had everyone dancing and singing along. I always have a blast people watching at Hollywood. They have a very crazy clientele for sure!

The last band of the month and of 2021 was the Vertigo Vultures at Riverside Camping Association. Angie, Michele, and I decided to take a road trip to finally check these guys out. We've heard so much about them, and we were happy we finally got the chance to see them! I never saw their lead singer Kyle Schnitzer before, but he is definitely a force to be reckoned with. He has the perfect voice with his bluesy growl to sing the classic and southern rock tunes they can pull off effortlessly. Steven Austin and Sam Sweigert I knew from Banished for Life, and then Kyle Hetzel on drums, and John Fischer used to play together years ago in a band called Full Moon. All of the guys together make one heck of a sound. Angie was very excited to even hear some Rolling Stones! Steve even added a keyboard to the mix, showing off his musical talents even more! We had a blast dancing the night away with these guys, and I'm sure our paths will cross more in 2022!

It's hard to believe that's a wrap for 2021! Again, it was another year of amazing musicians who ultimately have become my friends. I couldn't imagine my life without any of you. Music is definitely my therapy, and when I can't go out for one reason or another, I can definitely tell. I'm extremely grateful to everyone who has supported me and the magazine throughout the past year. By working together, we can make the music scene continue to happen in Central PA and beyond! Don't forget advertising is a great way to build your band or business. We have business cards for as low as $30/month. You can even pay in advance, and get it even cheaper! Give Josh a call and he will hook you up with a great deal… 717-636-4203.

Last but not least.. I need to shout out Happy Birthday to my beautiful sister, Andrea Green on January 6th! She's an amazing sister that I love ever so much!!!! And then January 8th, is my hubby, Kris Boob's birthday! He's my rock and there wouldn't be a Rachel Rocks if it wasn't for him encouraging me to get out of the house and have some "me" time.

Everyone have an awesome January! And if you see me Out and About please stop me and say Hi!! If you have any questions or comments feel free to hit me up at RachelRocks@pamusician.net. SUPPORT LOCAL MUSIC and SMALL BUSINESSES!

NATIONALS

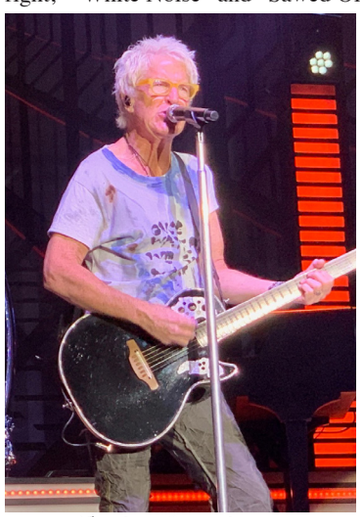
By Eric Hoffman

Greetings Rockers 'N' Rollers! Happy New Year! The live industry is projected to return bigger than ever in 2022 with an expected increase in ticket prices and fans eager to get back to live shows. Huge tours from major artists are being announced daily including: Jack White (49-dates), Tim McGraw (17-dates), Bob Weir (17-dates), Bonnie Raitt (19-dates), Nick Cannon (23-dates), Shinedown (24-dates), Billie Eilish (65-dates), Red Hot Chili Peppers (35-dates), Elton John (80-dates), Foo Fighters (39-dates), Eagles (13-dates), Justin Bieber (102-dates), Tenacious D (7-dates), Bright Eyes (12-dates) , Jack Johnson (30-dates), 'Weird Al' Yankovic (133-dates), Andrea Bocelli (5-dates), Iron Maiden (23-dates), Keith Urban (48-dates), Chris Stapleton (27-dates), Judas Priest (24-dates), Twenty One Pilots (23-dates), Greta Van Fleet (24-dates), Robert Plant & Alison Krauss (18-dates), Brian Wilson & Chicago (25-dates), Styx & REO Speedwagon (35-dates), Journey & Billy Idol (40-dates) and The Cure (44-dates in Europe). And the tour announcements show no sign of slowing.

Last month, Philadelphia legends, The Hooters visited the mid-state with a show at Harrisburg's XL Live on Dec 4 presented by Harrisburg University. The band combines elements of rock, reggae, ska and folk music to create their sound and gained major commercial success in the mid-80s due to heavy radio airplay and MTV rotation. The Hooters are most known for their hits, "All You Zombies," "Day by Day," "And We Danced," "Time After Time" and "Where Do the Children Go." In 1985, The Hooters opened the Philadelphia portion of the infamous Live Aid benefit concert.

On Dec 8, REO Speedwagon played to a packed Penn's Peak in Jim Thorpe, PA. The legendary band which formed in 1967 in Champagne, Illinois continues to tour frequently and is currently touring to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of their best-selling Hi Infidelity, which contained four US Top 40 hits and sold more than 10 million copies. The band has sold more than 40 million records in their career and had two number one hits, "Keep On Loving You" and "Can't Fight This Feeling." In March 2020, REO Speedwagon, appeared in an episode of Netflix tv series Ozark, which reentered four of REO's songs into the Billboard rock charts.

Canadian band, The Glorious Sons, returned to Harrisburg's XL Live on Dec 9. The band had visited Central PA once before in February 2019. The Glorious Sons have released three albums since forming in 2011 and are known for hits, "Everything Is Alright," "White Noise" and "Sawed Off Shotgun." They have eight consecutive top-10 rock radio hits in Canada.



Kevin Cronin

The highlight of this past month included a trip to New York City to see two incredible shows. Inhaler (from Dublin, Ireland) played an amazing sold-out show at Mercury Lounge. The young band is gaining popularity at an alarming rate, with sold-out shows and a recent appearance on the Jimmy Kimmel late-night tv show. Inhaler sound reminiscent of early U2 music - possibly in part to singer Elijah Hewson being the son of singer Bono. Inhaler return to the States in March - nearby shows include Washington DC's 9:30 Club on March 7 and Philadelphia's TLA on March 8. The following night, Toilet Boys opened for Lunachicks for a sold-out show at Webster Hall. Both legendary New York City punk bands were awesome and hadn't played together in over 20 years. There is a distinct feeling of something truly incredible when original New York City bands play their City.

NATIONAL NEWS: Eddie Vedder is ready to take his new band on the road. After making their live debut at Vedder's own Ohana Festival in September, the Earthlings will join the Pearl Jam frontman for a run of dates in February. The Earthlings feature drummer Chad Smith, keyboardist Josh Klinghoffer, bassist Chris Chaney, guitarist Glen Hansard, and guitarist Andrew Watt.

continued on next pg...

Theo Kogan / Lunachicks

Eddie Vedder's new album, Earthling, due out Feb. 11. The album marks Vedder's first new solo project since 2011's Ukulele Songs. The 8-dates tour begins with two nights at the Beacon Theatre in New York Feb. 3-4.

Bright Eyes will resume their reunion tour next spring. The band's upcoming trek will see them performing songs from their most recent album, 2020's Down in the Weeds, Where the World Once Was. The band's spring shows also include stops in Pittsburgh (Apr 5), Philadelphia (Apr 8), Washington, D.C. (Apr 9). After wrapping up their North American tour dates, Bright Eyes will hit the road in Europe. Bright Eyes announced a 2020 tour in January 2020 that was moved to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Due to the outbreak of the Delta variant over the summer, Bright Eyes canceled the indoor shows on their rescheduled 2021 tour.

Foo Fighters announced a North American summer tour that will take the revered alt-rock band to stadiums, amphitheaters and festivals. The Foos first hit the road in May, with dates at The Pavilion at Star Lake in Burgettstown, Penn. (May 14), Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, MD (May 16 & 18) and Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field (July 24). Foo Fighters were leaders in live music's return this year, staging the first full-capacity concert at New York's Madison Square Garden since the pandemic began on June 20, which doubled as one of the first arena shows in the country since coronavirus' March 2020 arrival.

Jack White announced an extensive 2022 tour that will take the legendary rocker to arenas, theaters, amphitheaters and festivals in North America and Europe. White kicks off "The Supply Chain Issues Tour" in his native Detroit. Live Nation will produce the tour, White's first headlining run on his own in four years. Stops include: Pittsburgh's Petersen Event Center (April 14), Washington, D.C.'s Anthem (April 19), Baltimore's Pier Six Pavilion (Aug 24). In November, White announced plans to release two new albums – his first since 2018's Boarding House Reach – in 2022, with Fear of the Dawn arriving April 8 and Entering Heaven Alive dropped July 22.

Midnight Oil announced the routing for its final tour, set to launch Down Under in early 2022 and titled "Resist" after its new album. "Having always tackled every tour like it's the last – this time it actually will be," said singer Peter Garrett, adding, "We've reached people in ways we never could have imagined. Our desire to create and speak out is undimmed." The iconic band created global waves since the late 70's with anthems about social injustice, indigenous rights, nuclear nightmares and environmental issues. In 2017 Midnight Oil returned from a long hiatus for an epic "Great Circle Tour," selling out 77 shows in 16 countries.

Bruce Springsteen has sold his publishing catalog to Sony for a reported $500 million. The musician has sold his masters and his publishing to Sony Music in a combined deal. Springsteen has remained with Sony's Columbia Records since he launched his career and has sold 65.5 million albums. Springsteen joins a list of artists who have parted ways with their publishing rights, including Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, Mick Fleetwood, Shakira, Jimmy Iovine, and David Crosby. Neil Young explained to fans after news of his deal broke, "Time is passing. I want to cover my family and my art ... A good father plans on how to take care of his children."

Michael Nesmith, the wool-hatted, guitar-strumming member of the made-for-television rock band The Monkees, died at the age of 78. Nesmith, who had undergone quadruple bypass surgery in 2018, died at home Dec 10 of natural causes, his family said in a statement. Nesmith was a struggling singer-songwriter in September 1966 when "The Monkees" television debut turned him and fellow band members Micky Dolenz, Peter Tork and David Jones into overnight rock stars. The Monkees had 6 songs become Top 10 Billboard hits during the show's two-year run. Three others, "I'm a Believer," "Daydream Believer" and "Last Train to Clarksville," reached No. 1.

This month marked record breaking guitar auction sales. Paul McCartney's Yamaha BB-1200 electric bass guitar that was played on tour and in the studio with Wings sold for $496,100, overtaking Bill Wyman's 1969 Fender Mustang bass that sold for $384,000 last year. Eddie Vedder's placid-blue Fender Telecaster that was smashed during Pearl Jam's show at Wrigley Field on August 20, 2018 during a cover of The Who's "Baba O'Riley" and signed by the frontman, sold for $266,200 - which broke the record for highest-selling smashed guitar at auction.

The Rolling Stones were the highest grossing tour of 2021, bringing in $115.5 million and more than 516,000 tickets over the course of just two months. The World's Greatest Rock & Roll Band, outdid themselves nearly 60 years into their infamous career. What the Stones achieved in 2021 with the restart of their "No Filter Tour" stands out as among one of the legendary group's greatest accomplishments. The immense loss of Charlie Watts, the original Rolling Stones drummer. His passing at age 80 on Aug. 24, 2021, just a month out from the "No Filter" kickoff, was a blow for The Stones, "We knew he was in the hospital, but we thought he was doing okay. He had insisted we do the tour without him if he wasn't going to be able. We were hoping that he would come back somewhere in the middle of the tour, but he insisted we do it, and so we did." With the Stones 60th year approaching, the band's marketing department was asked whether the band will tour, their reply "We can't talk about it." Which is a far better answer than no.

UPCOMING SHOWS: Menzingers - Harrisburg HMAC Jan 7. The Super High-Tech Jet Fighters - York, West York Inn Jan 8. Jet Silver - Lancaster Tellus 360 Jan 14. Jimmie's Chicken Shack - Millersville Phantom Power Jan 14. Martini Bros - Hershey Englewood Jan 22. Anthrophobia - Bensalem Broken Goblet Jan 21. Anthrophobia - Pottstown Rivet Jan 22.

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SUICIDE PUPPETS

The Suicide Puppets have been a busy band for the last year and we decided to catch up with them this month and find out exactly what they have been up to. For people not familiar The Suicide Puppets are an Industrial/black metal band formed in 2006. The band consists of Twisty Suicide on vocals, Jonny Suicide on the Bass, Tattuicide on lead guitar, Steven Suicide also lead guitar, Donnie Von Gailinger Rhythm guitar and Veritas Suicide on drums. They have been making some major moves and have just recently completed a tour with National act Soulfly.

It was a crazy year for local bands and music venues so the Puppets decided to take the show on the road and reach out to a new fan base. As two time winners of the CPMA's "Best Metal Band" they figured it was time to start sharing the love with the rest of the nation. They were struggling early in the year to find the right tour to help showcase the band but when an offer to tour with the Soulfly Tribe came up, they jumped at the chance.

When asked "What was the best part of the Soulfly Tour?" they all agreed that touring with one of there favorite bands on a National level was certainly a life-long dream for all the guys in the band. Some of the best moments on tour were talking with fans before and after the shows and really getting to connect with them. From previous fans of the Puppets, who have never had a chance to see them live, to new fans who they made that night. Even some first time junior rockers, who had never been to a concert, who afterwards approached the guys asking for autographs. The faces and smiles that they encountered will stick with them for a lifetime.

The hardest part of touring with 6 of your bandmates across the country? Was hands down the long hours spent in the tour van traveling from show to show. The regular routine was arrive at venue, load in sound check, chill, Jam out, chill some more then after the show hit a hotel for a couple hours then back in the van and heading for the next town. Keeping up with the Soulfly Tribe was not a problem for the guys as they have had there share of long nights and they quickly proved that being on time and not messing around, when it comes to tear down and setup, went a long way with the crew at Soulfly. The hardest longest legs of driving were New York to Detroit about 9 hours and another long one from Alabama to Huston Texas. One thing for sure next time they will get a bigger van/bus to accommodate the guys better and give them some more room on those long drives. The other thing they learned was to not rely on the "house" sound guy. While a majority of the venues had excellent sound crews there were a couple spots were they had wished they had brought along there own sound tech to help dial things in a bit better. In one case The Soulfly Camp came to the rescue and took over the board to save the day.

When asked what was the most listened to album on the road it sort of stumped the guys as they hadn't really listened to much music along the way and instead ending up listening to a lot of Comedy channels and podcasts to help break up the time and increase the laughter content. They did spend some time listening to some of the new music they are working on for 2022 and used the time together to tweak new material.

Looking back at all the spots they all agreed that Texas is the place they would like to go back to and tour again. They made a tremendous amount of new fans with the highlight of the state being the El Paso show. They were met with a full venue of screaming heavy metal fans that could not get enough of the Puppets. Being on the border it was as if they had left the country and the crowd was thirsty for some American Metal. The guys all agreed it was a show they will never forget and the highlight of the tour.

So what's in store for the puppets for 2022? While they were offered another spot on tour with Soulfly the timing was just not right so they had to pass. Juggling band life with your regular day to day duties means you just can't jump at every offer. The guys are hoping to get on another tour or two this year and already have some feelers out there. Along with touring they are also working on releasing a new single real soon so keep your ears and eyes peeled for that and some new tour announcements. There main focus will be bigger local shows and limiting them to 4-5 times a year with the main focus being tours or playing new venues. They also hope to keep the crown and bring home the CPMA's "Best Metal Band" 3rd year in a row. When asked about the unmasked Johhnny Joe's show and if the makeup was gone. The answer was a little vague. Just like every Puppet show you never know what surprises it may bring.

The Suicide Puppets would like to thank first and foremost all the fans, friends and family that have supported them and help them accomplish there dreams as a band. The Soulfly Tribe (Max, Gloria, Richie, Ken Dog, Zyon, Mike, Phil and Mark). Kim Hansen, Dino from Fear Factory, Ryan Raes from Distilled Entertainment, Goblin Alchemy, Dirt Bag Clothing, Logan the Merch Bitch, SGC Custom Drums, Soul Tone Cymbals, and Brent Lesperance. Last but not least they would like to thank Steve and Donnie for blowing off this interview.

To follow along you can find the guys on facebook @suicidepuppetsband on instagram @suicidepuppets and on the web at suicidepuppets.com

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RIDER'S ON THE STORM

By Chris Rider

Happy New Year! As I sit here listening to Robert Plant ramble on about rambling on, I'm struck by the lyrics and how a lot of them fit my life, and perhaps the lives of many.... other than that bit about Gollum LOL. Good riddance to 2021...but if we're being honest with ourselves, the year had a lot of high points if we look for them. Some highlights of 2021, at least photographically, for me include but aren't limited to: photographing my personal favorite musician for the third time, and meeting him for my first time. I was able to photograph shows for a number of national acts that I've followed for quite a while. I was able to photograph the performances of a lot of local musicians that I've known for a while, and a number of them that I got to meet for the first time. Winning "Best Photographer 2020" from Central Pennsylvania Music Hall Of Fame is a pretty huge highlight for me – once again thank you to everyone that took the time to give me a vote! Completing promotional photoshoots for a number of fantastic local bands to help them promote themselves as the local music scene rebounds from the last two years. I can't lie...I'm pretty excited to see what 2022 brings.

First up for the month, I headed over to Sherman's Creek Inn to see Shea Quinn and Logan Bedard play for a great crowd. Covering songs from Tom Petty, Tommy Tutone, Violent Femmes, and even a few Shark's tunes...everyone in attendance had a great time. SCI has music pretty much every weekend, they've got a great staff whipping up original drinks and great food...I can't recommend this place enough. It's definitely worth stopping in for a visit!

Shea Quinn & Logan Bedard

Next up, I was invited down to The Englewood to photograph the CPMHOF's Youth Showcase. 10 local youth musicians and bands were selected to come to The Englewood and showcase their music with one song of their choosing. Performing covers from Jimi Hendrix to Violent Femmes, and an original or two, all of these young acts brought their incredible music to the stage and did such an awesome job. Each of the acts were also presented with a something to help them further their careers: from recording time in a studio, to personalized merch for them to sell and promote themselves further. I'd like to once again congratulate Carsyn Kinneman for being presented with a complementary promotional photoshoot donated by Chris Rider Photography. I loved her performance and really can't wait to work with her!

Later in the day, I came back to The Englewood to catch the Alt-Country Christmas show with Holly Serio and Cold Spring Union. The evening started off with solo artist Holl Serio, playing keyboard and sometimes ukulele while performing a number of Christmas songs including All I Want For Christmas, Santa Baby and others including an original song that I really enjoyed called "Epiphany". Cold Spring Union then came on stage with their rock/souther rock covers as well as a number of originals. Holly came back up on stage and joined them for a few Christmas songs including a great version of "Christmas Sarajevo".

A few days later, I headed down to HMAC for a night of funky, psychedelic jams. There were some last minute line-up changes that included two bands that I was not familiar with, but was looking forward to hearing. First up was The Scouts. I'm still not sure the last time I had a parfait, but they made me consider this very important question. Playing a variety of psychedelic jams with good energy, strong tones and rhythms, as well as some very melancholy passages...these guys had a great feel to their very balanced sound which I enjoyed a lot. Next up was Denny Zinger. This 5 piece band brought a funk/rock/classic rock feel that was very reminiscent of Iron Butterfly. They had an amazing energy to them, ending the set with an Ozzy cover that blew the crowd away. Headlining the evening was The Stonewall Vessels. Describing their music is almost impossible as they don't fit any one (or even several) genre...but the ones that come immediately to mind would be funk/blues/jam/rock. Playing a slew of original music and a few covers including Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams". They brought a crowd that loved them and clearly follows them from show to show...and those that didn't know them before the show were surely fans afterwards.

Nate Myers

Cold Spring Union

My final trip out was down to The Grotto in Enola to see Nate Myers and Chris Purcell play a set (along with drummer Jimmy!). Playing a number of great covers including Ain't No Sunshine, Wagon Wheel, and Rod Stewart's "Ooh La La" (I wish that I new what I know now when I was younger – words a lot of us can relate to I'm sure LOL), as well as a number of Nate Myers originals including my personal favorite - "Beauty All Around". The place was packed, the beer and food was delicious, and the music was great...it was the perfect bookend for the month and the year.

So there it is, my month of music through my eyes and ears. Just a reminder: if you've got a show coming up that I should see, make sure to send me an invite, shoot me an email or a message, let me know about it. Venues: please don't hesitate to reach out to me as well. The majority of the shows that I go and shoot I find out about through invites from all of you or your friends. Hit me up on facebook: @chrisriderphotography or email: chrisriderphotography@gmail.com, stop me if you see me out & around and say hi. Until next month...go find some live music and give them and the venue your support, they truly need it more now than they ever did.

THE PROFESSOR

By Jim Price

And into another year we go…Welcome to 2022! The beginning of the New Year is always a good opportunity to look forward, refocus and set new goals and objectives. Here's hoping all of our readers are able to reach their goals and prosper in the 12 months ahead!

I experienced several musical highlights before 2021 reached its end…One of them was a road trip to the Harrisburg Midtown Arts Center just before Thanksgiving to witness Swedish guitar legend Yngwie Malmsteen. This was my first time seeing Yngwie live, and before a wall of Marshalls, he brought the expected guitar fireworks; from volatile and detailed full-speed shredding and arpeggios to intricate and softer classical interludes, and everything in between – just watching his fingers move on the strings was mesmerizing unto itself! And he was the showman as well, working the stage and doing all the axe hero acrobatics such as playing behind his back and neck, with his teeth, whipping his guitar around himself, tossing guitar picks out after nearly every song and more. Yngwie and his band did some numbers off his latest album, "Parabellum," as well as "The Seventh Sign," "You Don't Remember, I'll Never Forget" and many more. He also did a guitar version of the "Star Spangled Banner," as well as his version of Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water." For his encore, Yngwie started out playing solo on acoustic guitar, eventually switching back to electric guitar and his band joining in for his popular instrumental "Black Star" to finish the night. Besides seeing Yngwie for the first time, this show also provided my first chance to see both opening bands...Images Of Eden singer Gordon Tittsworth has been a guest on my "Homegrown Rocker" radio program four times since 2004, and this was the first time I got to witness him and Images Of Eden live, as they have been touring with Yngwie and were the middle band of this night's triple-bill. Gordon, drummer Steve Dorssom, guitarist Victor Morell, bassist Eric Mulvaine and keyboardist Dean Harris were clearly fired up to be playing before this central PA crowd, and brought the energy and intensity with their progressive-edged brand of rock and metal. Images Of Eden did several songs from their latest album, "Angel Born" – including "My Promise," "Serenity Reign" (with guest Michael Wolff joining in on acoustic guitar) and their popular update of Triumph's classic "Fight the Good Fight"; they also did a couple of numbers off their previous "Soulrise" album. Gordon's voice displayed passion, range and edge as he belted his words and addressed the crowd between songs, and Images Of Eden's instrumental execution was fiery, tight and intense. They energized this crowd, and I came away amazed as well – I look forward to seeing Images Of Eden on stage again sometime soon. Opening the night was Brooklyn, New York-based power trio Sunlord. Frontman and guitarist Al Ferrazza, bassist Emilio Martinez and drummer Griffin McCarthy brought an aggressive, hard-driving metal sound that hinted at Motorhead with a more doom-metal leaning. With his coarse and gravelly growl up front, Al led Sunlord on a set of original numbers, including the crowd-captivating "Do Your Push Up," "The Forbidden Witch" and more. Their scathing and relentless presentation set the hard-hitting tone for the night, and provided the opening spark for this concert.

Yngwie Malmsteen
photo by jp

Christmas season's arrival brought some more recent highlights…Five bands donated their talents during a Toys for Tots fundraiser early last month at the Root Hovett Hall near Patton. I missed the first band, York-based punk rockers Coffee With Lions, but heard that they delivered a strong set and were well-received by the crowd. Altoona's Abstentious was just under way as I arrived, and they generated feverish velocity on their set of original punk rock. Singer and guitarist Brayden Adams, bassist and singer Noah Keller and drummer Jake Hicks played with speed and intensity on each song, yet executed it all tightly.

Emilio Martinez of Sunlord at HMAC photo by jp

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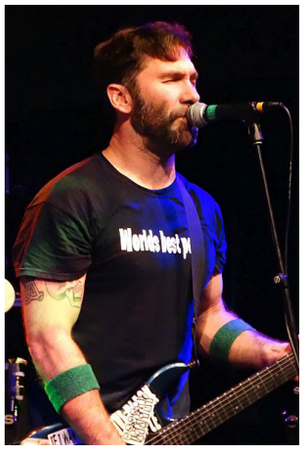
TICKETS ON SALE FRIDAY JANUARY 7th 10am

Images of Eden at HMAC photo by jp

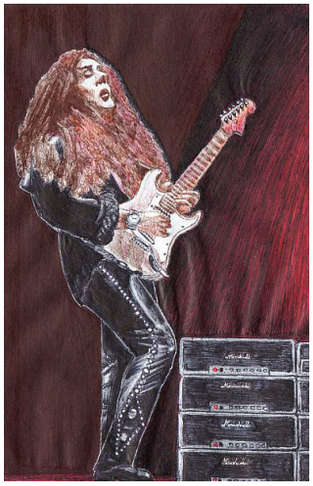
Following them was Treaties, also firing off driving, fast-paced punk rock. Singer and guitarist Brandon Kane, bassist Brad Davis and drummer Toby Hunter kept the crowd excited with their blend of hard-hitting rhythms, effective melodies and vocal harmonies. Toby played drums in the next band as well – Deny Your Maker, Negan's Alice In Chains tribute side project. Toby, singer and concert organizer Mike Davis, guitarists Bob Gray and Jeremy Ashurst, and bassist Josh Yahner mixed favorites and deeper numbers from the Alice In Chains catalog. And The Snipped finished the night with their exciting set of 'dadcore' punk rock. Singer and guitarist Wax, lead guitarist and singer Jeff Reid, bassist and singer Frank Conrad and drummer Justin Burket fired off a number of songs from their forthcoming new CD, "Tales From the Workbench" (which comes out this month), as well as favorites from their "#dadcore" CD. They delivered their tunes with feverish energy as well, and triggered some vigorous moshpit action in front of the stage. This benefit was a big success, raising $400 in cash donations and more than 100 toys for the U.S. Marine Corps' Toys For Tots. This event will return, bigger and better, to the Root Hovett Hall on December 3.

In German legend, Krampus is a horned, half-demon companion of St. Nicholas that punishes misbehaving children during Christmas. Krampus made its return to Altoona's Unter Uns Musical & Entertainment Society last month, as Fortune & Glory provided the music. The family contingent of singer Dana Martino, husband and guitarist Art Martino, son Nicholas Martino on bass plus Bryan Starr on drums played classic rock'n'roll favorites before and after Krampus' visit. That visit happened at the beginning of the second set, as Fortune & Glory played AC/DC's "Highway to Hell" for Krampus' entrance music. Fortunately, St. Nicholas entered shortly after, providing candy and treats to the audience. Fortune & Glory kept the audience festive and dancing the rest of the evening with tunes from Grand Funk Railroad, Duran Duran, Tom Petty, The Knack, Tesla, Queen, Melissa Etheridge, Scandal, Three Doors Down and more.

For 40 years, a seasonal gathering of area musicians – Jack Frost & the Frostbytes – have helped Altoona area residents celebrate the Christmas season, often traveling in their own truck around neighborhoods and in Christmas parades to perform their brassy takes on Christmas carol favorites. With two members sidelined and unable to travel this past holiday season, five members of Jack Frost & the Frostbytes convened last month for their annual appearance at a single location, the Barrels & Beans Conference Center at Pennview Estates near Penn State Altoona. Scott Durbin on bells, Jeff Livermore on trumpet, Bill Wold on trombone, Scott Woomer on baritone and Rick Guyer on drums entertained holiday revelers with their playful instrumental versions of such favorites as "We Wish You A Merry Christmas," "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer," "Let It Snow" and their New Orleans jazz-toned rendition of "Jingle Bells." The group said that a "Christmas in July" tour around the area might be in the works, and they expect to be back at full strength for next holiday season.



Jimmy Bastard of the Bastard Bearded Irishmen photo by jp



Yngwie Malmsteed by Jim Price

Another exciting show highlight was the first visit of Pittsburgh's Fabulous Booze Brothers Show Band and Revue to McGarvey's in Altoona during Thanksgiving weekend. Formed in 2012 and 11 members strong, this group celebrates the music of the Blues Brothers and performs classic soul, blues and R&B. Ted Boyko and David Schroeder wear the black suits, ties and hats in the Jake and Elwood Blues roles, backed by a lead guitarist, drummer, bassist, keyboard player and five-piece horn section. Over two sets, the

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Andy Gorscak of the Fabulous Booze Brothers

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the Professor continued...

Booze Brothers performed many of the favorites associated with the Blues Brothers' movie, soundtrack and "Briefcase Full of Blues" album – including Floyd Dixon's "Hey Bartender," Spencer Davis' "Gimme Some Lovin,'" Junior Wells' "Messin' with the Kid," The Chips' "Rubber Biscuit," Sam & Dave's "Hold On, I'm Comin'" and "Soul Man," "Everybody Needs Somebody to Love," "Theme to Rawhide," Tammy Wynette's "Stand By Your Man," a sing-along version of Cab Calloway's "Minnie the Moocher" and more. They also did numbers from James Brown, The Soul Survivors, the Isley Brothers, Eddie Floyd, Johnnie Taylor, Al Green and others. The Booze Brothers played it all with soul, swing and swagger, with 'Jake" and 'Elwood' stepping in front of the stage and working the entire room. And this group definitely studied the "Blues Brothers" movie – when they broke into Robert Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago" toward the end of the night, 'Jake' and 'Elwood' both left the stage early (much as they did to escape the police in the movie), followed by their version of "Jailhouse Rock" to finish the night (which the Blues Brothers played in a jail cell at the end of the movie). This show was lively, energetic and a lot of fun – watch for the return of the Fabulous Booze Brothers Show and Revue to McGarvey's in the future, and the group debuts as a regular performance act at Pittsburgh's Rivers Casino in February.

The luck of the Irish was onstage at McGarvey's in December, first with the return of Pittsburgh's Bastard Bearded Irishmen

Treaties at Toys for Tots photo by jp

Justin of The Snipped at Toys for Tots photo by jp

early in the month. The Jaded Lips opened up the night with their punchy and melody-geared rock, featuring original song favorites like "Miss Sunflower," "Lockdown," "Where Do We Run," a cover of the Talking Heads' "Burning Down the House" and more. Six members strong this night, the Bastard Bearded Irishmen then mixed their high-powered blend of traditional Celtic styles with punk and rock'n'roll, and threw a few Irish rock takes on Christmas season songs in for good measure. The group did numbers from their latest album, "Drinkin' to the Dead," as well as earlier favorites such as "Last Drink," "Whiskey, Rum, Bourbon, Beer" and more. The group also offered their Celtic-rocking takes on "Santa Baby," "Holly Jolly Christmas" and "Must Be Santa Claus," and honored a request for their accelerating rendition of "Rattlin' Bog." The Bastard Bearded Irishmen were lively and rowdy, with singer and guitarist Jimmy Bastard and mandolinist Danny Rectenwald breaking into fast jigs and dancing on the stage, and sometimes bringing the party out into the crowd. Toward night's end, the group did their extended version of the title track to "Drinkin' to the Dead," during which Jimmy ran up the steps and played guitar from McGarvey's balcony area. When the crowd demanded an encore, the group responded with their song "Bartender's Friend." The Bastard Bearded Irishmen return to McGarvey's on March 5, when they open for Chicago Celtic rockers The Tossers.

Also opening that Tossers show in March will be local Celtic rock favorites Full Kilt, who also played at McGarvey's last month. Singer and guitarist Mike Zerbee, bassist and singer Chris Myers, fiddle player Mandy Passmore-Ott and drummer Jake Yarnish brought the fun with their mixture of traditional Celtic numbers, rocked-up versions of Irish favorites and Irish-flavored renditions of rock and pop favorites. Included this night were versions of Garth Brooks' "Ireland," Steve Earle's "Galway Girl," U2's "With Or Without You," "Wagon Wheel," the audience clap-along duel version of "Whiskey in the Jar," Carbon Leaf's "The

Jake Hicks of Abstentious photo by jp

Boxer," Dropkick Murphys' "I'm Shipping Up to Boston" and "Rose Tattoo," Queen's "Fat Bottomed Girls," Charlie "McDaniels"' "The Devil Went Down to (Dublin)" and more. The group also did a few of their own original tunes such as "Plastic Paddys" and their night-closer "Come Have A Drink With the Band." Full Kilt lifted spirits and pints of Guinness, and rallied the audience into steadily clapping along with their music as the night went along. According to Mike, Full Kilt is looking into recording a

Mandy Passmore-Ott of Full Kilt photo by jp

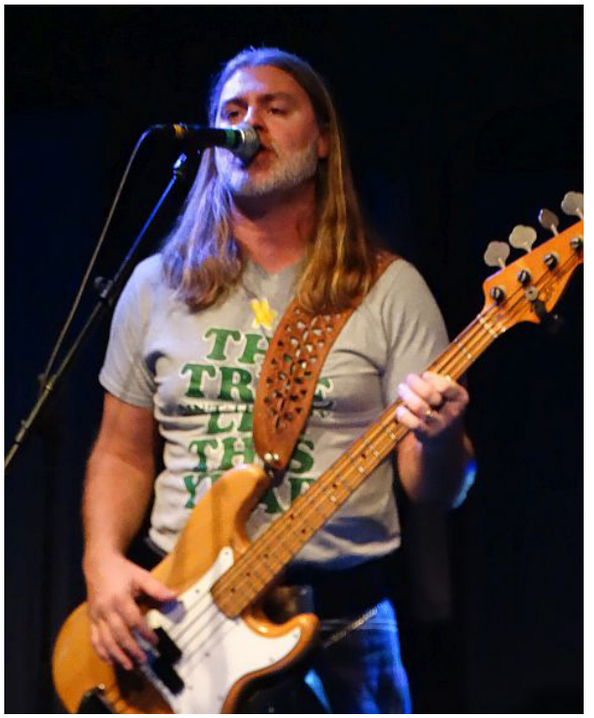
new album in the coming year.

Altoona's 4D's Lounge ushered in Thankgiving with the Thanksgiving Eve double-bill of Hot Fudge Mondaes and Sunset Over Mars. A new band on the area music scene, Sunset Over Mars showed an alternative rock/pop flavor as they began the night with a mixture of original songs and covers. Singer Stevey, guitarist Zach, bassist Kevin Neely (pulling double-duty this night with both bands) and drummer Nik warmed up the arriving crowd with their debut single "Stereo," as well as songs from Maroon 5, DNCE and more. Sunset Over Mars is continuing to record original songs, and will be issuing more of them soon. The house was packed by the time Hot Fudge Mondaes took the stage, and the group drew a number of audience members up to the dance floor with their blend of original modern rock/punk tunes, plus select covers. Singer Jake Mowery, Kevin on bass, Breydon Bremer on guitar and Christian Wesner on drums fired up the party with several of their original tunes including "Take What You Want," as well as tunes from Walk The Moon, The Offspring, Blink 182, Nirvana, Bowling For Soup, Lenny Kravitz, Fall Out Boy, and their rowdy edition of Rage Against the Machine's "Killing in the Name." Hot Fudge Mondaes brought the energy and explosiveness, especially Jake with his agitated delivery and full motion on the stage. Both of these bands are quickly building followings; watch for both on area stages in the coming months.

And I caught one of Felix & the Hurricanes' weekly Sunday night shows at Altoona's Black & Gold Tavern just before Christmas. Guest keyboardist Dave Villani joined Hurricanes mainstays Felix Kos on guitar and vocals, Jeff Clapper on bass and vocals, and Bob Watters on drums and vocals. The Hurricanes entertained a busy room with their reliable blend of classic and southern rock, blues, soul, plus some Christmas tunes and other surprises. As always, the Hurricanes were spontaneous this night, not using a set list and relying on the vibe of the audience to guide their musical selections. Audience requests resulted in the 'Canes pulling out Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock,"

Dana "DD" Martino of Fortune & Glory photo by jp

and versions of "Silver Bells" and the night-ending Christmas combo of "White Christmas" into "The Christmas Song." Other highlights included a salute to late Pittsburgh guitar great Glenn Pavone with a version of his song "Postman Jack," an extended jam version of Eric Clapton's "After Midnight," and – you had to hear it to believe it – the Hurricanes weaving The Commodores' "Brick House" and Al Green's "Take Me to the River" together, and then throwing a "Here Comes Santa Claus" rant into the



Chris Myers of Full Kilt photo by jp

groove! Fun and surprises always abound during the Hurricanes' Sunday shows at the Black & Gold Tavern; always a good time!

News and notes…The Central PA Music Hall Of Fame has announced their 2022 Inductees: Live, the Del McCoury Band, Les Brown, The Emperors, the Pixies Three and Third Stream. The induction ceremony and Central PA Music Awards will take place March 24 at the Hershey Theatre…Black Ridge, David Granati's Academy of Rock, Sahayra, Another Day and Down N'Dirty are some of the names donating talents during a benefit concert for drummer and percussionist David Blake, who recently underwent surgery for tongue and neck cancer; the Road to Recovery Concert will take place on Jan. 16 at Peppers N'at in Braddock…Fire damaged the new facility of drum-builders HHG Drums in Hollidaysburg on Dec. 10; according to owner Sam Thurau, the new shop is not a total loss and will be rebuilt, and HHG will continue operations in their present facility…

continued on next pg...

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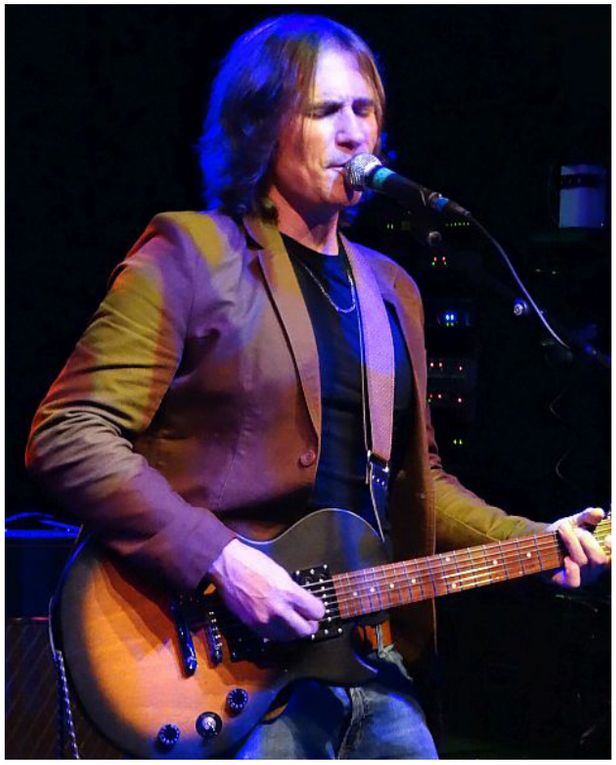
the Professor continued...

After more than two decades of entertaining audiences, Pittsburgh-based swing and rock ensemble Neon Swing X-perience has announced that they will be taking an indefinite break so that group members can pursue other projects…Matt Otis and the Sound have released their new album, "Here Not Here"…And on a sad note, Allan "Skip" Calhoun passed away on December 12 at age 69. Skip endeared himself to area music fans as Mick Jagger doppelganger "Skip Stone" in local Rolling Stones tribute groups Jumpin' Jack Flash and Dead Flowers, The Britz and other band projects.

Please send correspondence and recordings to: Jim Price, 1104 S. Catherine St., Altoona, PA 16602. You can also e-mail me at jptheprofessor@gmail.com. And if you're into social networking, look me up on Facebook. SUPPORT LOCAL and LIVE MUSIC IN 2022!

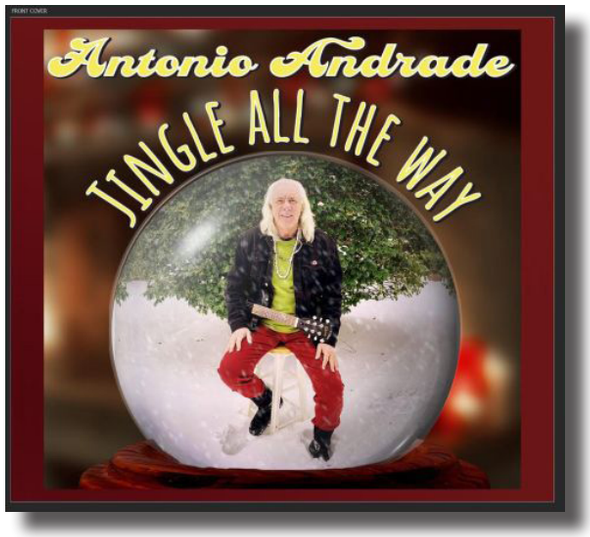


Miles Strong of the Jaded Lips photo by jp

Christian Wesner of Hot Fudge Mondaes photo by jp

PA MUSICIAN REVIEWS

By Jim Price



ANTONIO ANDRADE – JINGLE ALL THE WAY (Life Shakes Records) When the COVID-19 pandemic prevented Antonio Andrade from singing his Christmas cover songs to live audiences last holiday season, he decided instead to spend that season having fun with several of those holiday classics in the recording studio. The result is Jingle All the Way, Antonio's seventh full-length album and first holiday-themed set. Antonio selected eight time-tested holiday season favorites written between 1934 and 1962, and – considering that these have over time evolved into seasonal folk songs – he presents them in his own distinctive, folksy style. Antonio sings and plays harmonica, along with some acoustic guitar, ukulele, piano and percussion. Derek Euston – who co-produced the album with Antonio and recorded it at The Green Room in Harrisburg – plays bass throughout the album, along with guitars, keys and bells. And Amma Johnson provides bright and supportive backing vocals. Antonio establishes a joyful and gentle tone on his album-opening rendition of "Winter Wonderland," a song whose lyrics were inspired by a Pennsylvania winter scene. His clean harmonica tone leads into "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," and he applies a 4/4 time treatment to "Silver Bells." Antonio's version of "Let It Snow" lifts and builds into a gleeful celebration of indoor coziness, and soft drumming from Ed Lesser helps set the relaxing pace of "Jingle Bell Rock." A comfy mood permeates Antonio's rendition of "The Christmas Song," before the album picks up the pace in the homestretch with happy-going versions of "Sleigh Ride" and the album-closing "A Holly Jolly Christmas." This album captures a cordial, pleasant vibe from start to end. Antonio makes these seasonal staples his own; his clear voice shows sincerity, heart and warmth, and you can tell he enjoys these songs and the holiday season that inspired them. The simple arrangements preserve the songs' folksy presence, and allow the performances of Antonio and his cohorts to shine. Jingle All the Way is what a Christmas season album should be, as Antonio Andrade's latest effort provides a perfect accompaniment for decorating the Christmas tree. (The album can be obtained through Antonio's website, www.lifeshakes.com.)

DOCTOR SMOKE – DREAMERS AND THE DEAD (Ripple Music) Formed in 2012 and based in the Steubenville, Ohio-Weirton, West Virginia region just west of the PA border, Doctor

Smoke awakened the regional heavy metal world with their 2014 debut album The Witching Hour, introducing a powerful sound rooted in the 1970s doom-rock tradition of early Black Sabbath. The group has returned with a new and tenacious follow-up, Dreamers and the Dead. The cast of singer and guitarist Matt Tluchowski, lead guitarist Steve Lehocky, bassist Jeff Young and drummer Cody Cooke have crafted ten strong, distinctive and dark-toned numbers, each displaying captivating riffs and memorable song hooks, progressive-edged shifting tempos and rhythms, precision lead guitar work, and lyrical themes of death, finality, dreams, visions and the spirit world. Matt as frontman offers a blend of melody, vocal range and grit, along with a convincingly sinister demeanor. The opening track, "Reborn into Darkness," sets the album's tone with its busy rhythms, alluring song hook, and words pondering life's ending and what lies beyond. Riding a distinctive riff, "These Horrid Things" explores paranoia and hidden fear, while the rampaging "Waking Dreams" studies nightmares. The multi-tempo "Out of Time" reflects on life's wasted time and impending finality, and "Been Here Forever" presents a face-off with one's soul. The thrash-edged title track "Dreamers and the Dead" again explores dream visions and finality, the driving "The Rope" considers a suicide solution, and the brooding album-closer "This Hallowed Ground" envisions the dirt bath. The performances are powerful and tight, and Doctor Smoke executes these songs with authority. Their delivery is consistent, and although each song stands well on its own, these numbers gel into a cohesive, steady set. Recorded at studios in the Steubenville vicinity and mastered in Sweden, Dreamers and the Dead sounds balanced, sharp and thundering, with all vocals and instrumental components identifiable and clear in the mix. Doctor Smoke raises the bar on their brand of dark metal music with Dreamers and the Dead, an all-killer, no-filler set that should resonate with classic-styled metal fans and elevate this group's following and profile. (The album can be obtained through Doctor Smoke's Bandcamp page.)

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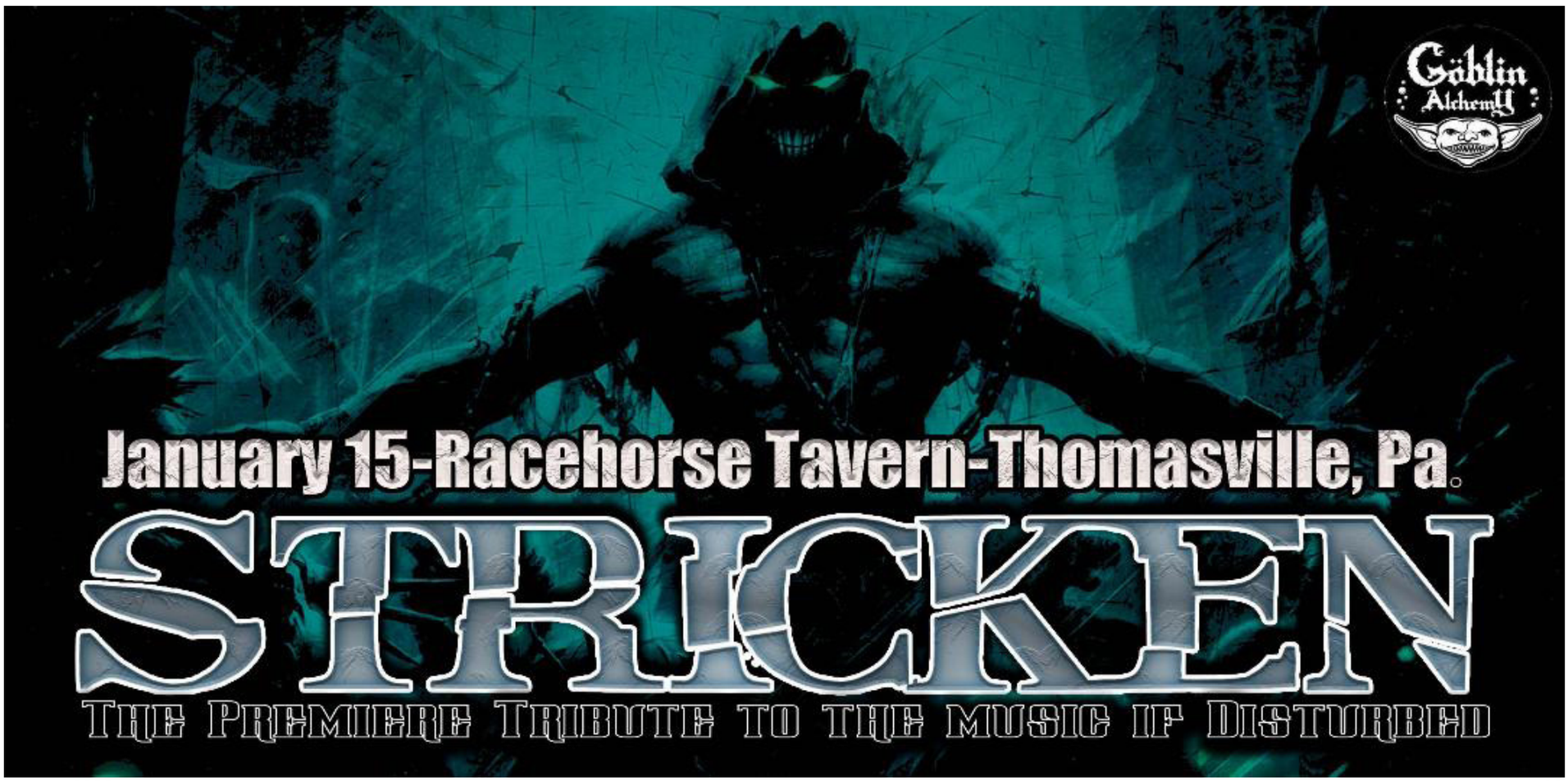

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